

BOTTICELLI AND SIMONETTA.

Within my garden at the city's heart
I muse and meditate the evening through,
While wave on wave of gold foams in the west,
And all the city swimming in the light
Is suddenly swamped and swallowed by the sun.

I watch the day die with a quiet heart,
And with as quiet a heart I watch my day
Die slowly, full of thoughts. For now at last
When I paint little or never and think much,
I turn instinctively toward the Past
When I was mad to paint, and never thought.
And sometimes sitting here so motionless,
So long and yet content, I wonder if
That truant Philipepi can be I,
Who chased about the windy ways of youth,
And could not face the task of sitting still,
And might not sleep for eagerness to live.

A rover and a wanderer was I,
Like all whom sea-born Venus captivates;
My heart was blind to duty and advice;
I could not follow problems out of books,
Indeed, I never learnt to read or write.
But every curious form of flower and leaf,
And every contour of careering clouds,
And every sharp-eyed creature of the waste—
These things I learnt to know. And strange it seems
That in the years of stern apprenticeship
That followed, it was only through these things
My eyes had so devoured in idleness
That I got fame. The lady of my joy
Was Venus, mistress of the morn of life,
She of the merry unperceiving eyes,
And most luxuriant hair, a youth's ideal
Whom he may meet with pacing on a lawn
Of jewelled flowers or in an idle bower,

BOTTICELLI AND SIMONETTA.

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A fair but soulless thing—a dangerous thing.
And so when later I essayed to paint
This phantom vision, and to serve my skill
The beauteous Simonetta stood adroop,
I banished knowledge from her shadowed eyes,
And from her lips their questioning, and left
No trace of the Madonna in her looks.

Anon, I bound me to the goldsmith's trade;
And having learnt thereby that beauty grows
By pain of the creator, I passed on
And dipped my brushes in the universe,
And drew a pencil line about the world;
And thenceforth looked on life as some fair slave,
A patient model to my handiwork.

If ever youth were sensitive
To outward semblances and scents and sounds
That youth was I. I loved rich draperies
Whose brodered dragons and flowers the showmen winds
Spread out and hid again. I heaped the rooms
With roses which I limned at fever-heat,
Even as a greedy man may feast i' the night.
I loved the workmanship of precious wares,
And goblets chased with fanciful device,
And much admired the pageants of the streets.
But most of all I loved the natural grace
Of woman, that fair flame that warms the world.
And Simonetta when I saw her first,
Seemed an epitome of all my loves:
For never did more wondrous needlework
Of fruits and long-tailed birds and scrolls of gold
Obscure a form so delicate and fine;
Never did rarer chains of pearl and gold
Bind such a throat or loop such loads of hair.
Nor ever did a braver following
Of kings and youths and poets and the like,
Claim such a peerless lady Queen of Hearts.

Slowly and gradually I groped my way
From staring at Beauty in a Pagan mood
To worshipping her, which is half religion.
And it was Simonetta the admired,

The flower of Florence, the magnificent;
 The inspiration of Lorenzo's muse,
 The flame of Guiliano's throbbing heart,
 The flattered, banquetted, and fashionable,
 Within the shadows of whose drooping eyes
 I read the lore of spiritual love
 For the first time, and was amazed to read,
 For here was Venus with a martyr's look:
 And not alone the fair and sensuous world
 Hailed her a goddess: but that realm of pain,
 The mystic haunt of shades behind the earth,
 Where souls take precedence by suffering,
 And every rag of earthly circumstance
 Is shrivelled in the ever-whistling blast;
 Here, too, she took an honoured hand-maid's place,
 Even where our Lady of Sorrows broods and smiles.

And so my soul awoke. And on the earth
 I saw the large proportion that this thing
 Bears in the mass of beauty. For behind
 The darkest face I saw the smile of God,
 And in the meanest little peasant babe
 I knew there lay the hope of all the race;
 And Simonetta, as I looked at her,
 Even she became a shade and passed away,
 And left the gay court glittering with tears.
 All things were changed from thenceforth; evermore
 The sumptuous cloaks of things seemed only rags
 So well one felt the form beneath; and deeds
 Seemed only thoughts unveiled and not so fair.
 And this life like a pageant flashing past,
 Which, when a neighbour plucks you by the sleeve
 And cries, "Look, look!" ere you can turn to see,
 Is gone and nothing left but empty dust.
 I dared not use time with eternity
 So near; and in the end I ceased to paint.

How grey has grown the garden suddenly!
 The sky how pale; the trees as sharp and clear
 As finest workmanship of filigree:
 And where I sit the flowers look large and dim

Sifting unreal faces from the dark.
 Once I were fain to paint a scene like this,
 And fix the fair tranquillity and space
 Within the whiteness of a cloister's shade.
 But now the thing is nothing more to me
 Who feel its inner passion, than to that
 Poor hind who hurries from his evening toil,
 And only eyes his boot-strings.

Who am I
 To lift my pencil in the face of God,
 In these last times of prophecy, when men
 Shall feel the earth escaping from their feet,
 And hear the calling and the punishing voice,
 That like a mantle wraps the globe in fear
 For the iniquities we have endured?
 Rather I choose to let the present slip,
 And wait the consummation of the night
 When heaven shall open like a blessed dawn.

"HARBINGER."

BIRD NOTES.

Our winter visitors were back early this year—fieldfares were seen early in October. and there were some pochard on Rydalmere at the end of November.

One afternoon in November two students walked as far as Nab Cottage on Rydalmere, and between that point and Rydal they saw fifteen moorhens. About nine of these were swimming together in one group, about four in another, and the others were seen at the edge of the water and on the bank in the ordinary way. Surely this is almost a record number of moorhens to be seen in such a short distance!

A new plan in keeping bird lists has been suggested, that the different years should be together, so that the dates of the appearances of migratory birds could easily be compared. These parallel columns of dates should be very interesting in time.

NATURE NOTES.

The squirrels are very active, and can be seen on the trees—chestnuts and plane, &c.—at the front gate, from the College windows.

A tulip tree leaf was picked up, and its measurement was taken and found to be 7 by $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

At the end of November a willow catkin was seen bursting.

WANTED!!

Authentic author of:—

“And she went into the garden to cut a cabbage leaf
to make an apple pie and the great
Panjandaram himself with the little brass button
on top.”

I fancy the author is Thomas Hood. Am I right?